

THE
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,

AND

EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY:

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION,

AS SET FORTH IN THE

Formularies of the Westminster Divines,

AND OF THE

CHURCHES OF HOLLAND.

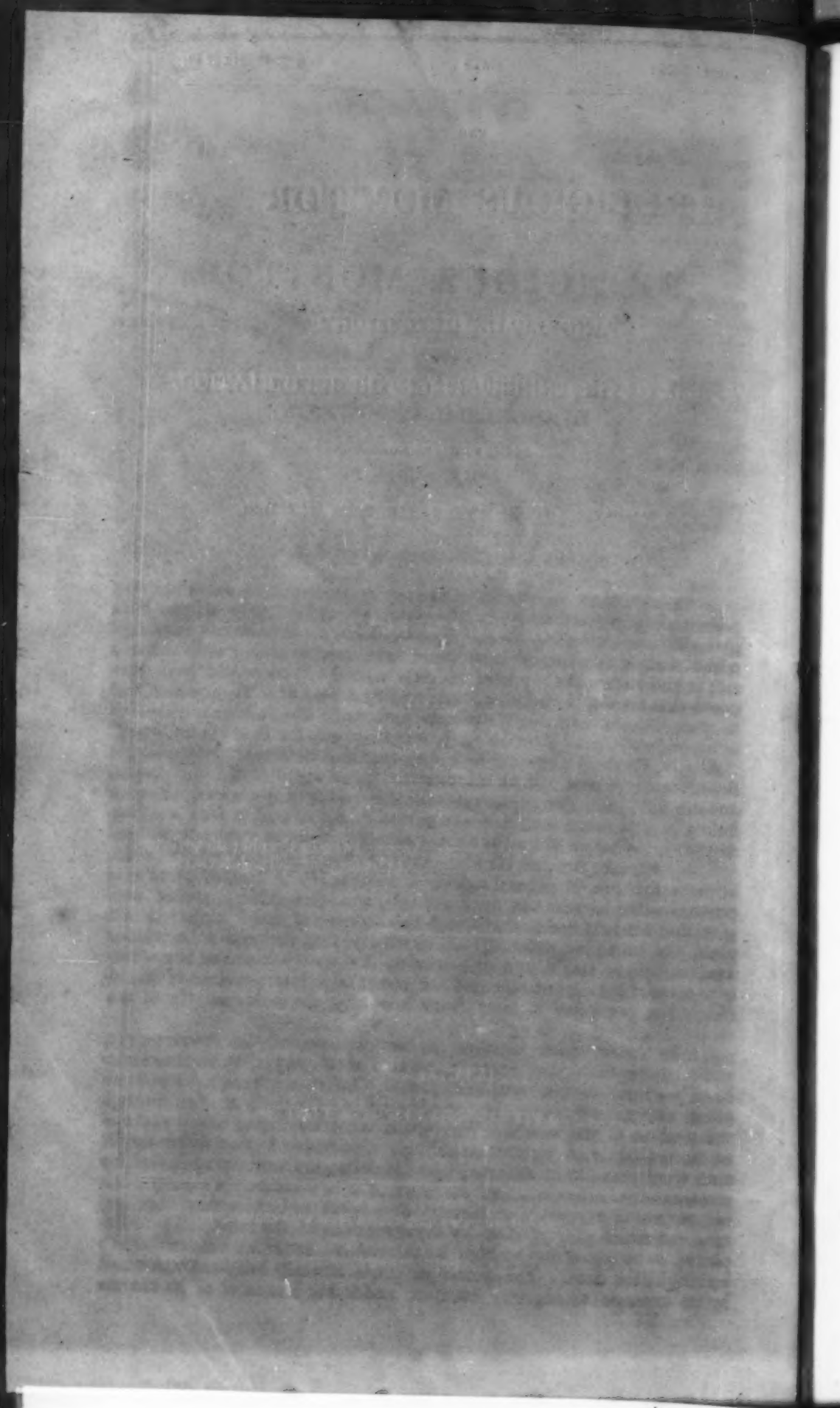
Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jer. vi. 16.

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MAY, 1835.

ART. I. *The Jealousy of God.*

If we had never observed in others, or experienced in ourselves, the power of corruption, we should be much amazed at many of the laws given us, and especially the law against idolatry. Who would have supposed that a rational creature could have been so stupid as to worship stocks and stones, the work of his own hands? Who would have supposed that he would choose a tree, employ a part of it as common fuel to roast his meat and warm his body, and make the residue a god—fall down before it, pray to it, and say, “Deliver me, for thou art my god?” (Isa. xlv. 17.) Who would have supposed that he would choose a little flour, employ a part of it as common food, and say, “Aha, I have eaten, and am full;” and that he would make the residue of it a wafer, fall down before it, and adore it as the very person of his Almighty God and Redeemer? What an absurdity is this, that the creature should think himself able to make his own Creator—that he should fear that which he can burn in the fire, or eat and digest, or trample in the dust, or grind into powder—that he who can think and feel, and see and hear, should imagine that his help lies in that which can do none of these things! It is a plain and humbling proof of our depravity, that we need to be warned against a sin so stupid, and still more so, that notwithstanding the warnings given, nothing but repeated and remarkable interpositions of Providence has prevented idolatry from becoming the universal sin of the world.

There is a difference between the two dispensations of the covenant, and a corresponding difference in the kind of idolatry to which those who have lived under them have been prone. The first dispensation had more of an external character; it was addressed to the faith of men through the medium of the senses. The second is more spiritual, and is addressed more directly to the understanding. Under the former dispensation, men were prone to an external, gross idolatry, the worshiping of God by some external representation, the work of men’s hands. Under the latter, we are in danger of an idolatry of a more refined and spiritual nature, the worshiping of God by the inventions of the mind. There appeared to be a growing aptitude for this change, about the time of Christ’s coming in the flesh. The power of gross idolatry had been weakened by its excesses among the heathen, and it had lost most of its charms

among the Israelites. The Pharisees especially were learning that more subtle and plausible, but not less dangerous idolatry, which consists in teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Yet Satan still keeps up both kinds of idolatry, even among them who profess the name of Christ. He has snares for all kinds of men—for wise men after the flesh, and for fools; for indolent worldlings, and for intemperate fanatics. He has the gross idolatry of Romanism for the ignorant and fanatical, and the more refined idolatry of numan inventions for those who are more enlightened and sober. Those, therefore, lie under a great mistake, who suppose that we have little or no concern with the second precept of the law, which forbids idolatry. If any command might be preferred on the ground of our proneness to transgress it, this would be the first and great commandment. And as the fifth is called the first commandment with promise, so the second is the first with threatening, and the threatening is very fearful: "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." This is not only the first place in the commandments where we meet with a threatening, but the first place in the Bible where we read of the jealousy of God; and all the other terrors used to awaken and alarm us are little compared with this.

The reasons annexed to the different commandments are not to be considered as general, but special. They are such as are designed to meet those particular ways in which corruption would encourage us either to evade or violate that particular commandment to which they are annexed. Thus the divine omniscience is virtually given as the reason of the first commandment. We are ready to transgress this commandment, secretly, saying in our hearts, "there is no God;" therefore we are reminded that God seeth this sin, and is much displeased with it. The reason annexed to the third commandment shows that men will always think slightly of the awful crime of blasphemy, and will pass it over with impunity. The reasons of the fourth commandment anticipate the objection of corrupt nature, that the Sabbath is an unreasonable restriction, and a useless burden. We are taught how reasonable it is that God, who has given us six days, should take to himself the seventh, and we are encouraged from the consideration of his blessing this day. As we have derived life from our parents, so the fifth commandment teaches us that our life will be long and prosperous, or short and evil, according to our treatment of those through whom this benefit is received. And do we not learn, from the manner in which the second commandment is given, and the reasons annexed to it, that men will be very ready to evade it, and to think lightly of their evasions? Observe how particular it is in the preceptive part, as anticipating the evasions of men: "Thou shalt not make unto thee *any* graven image, or *any likeness* of *any* thing;" then, still more particularly, not of "any thing that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth." We must not make images of God, the Father, nor of the Son, nor of the Spirit, nor of saints, nor of angels, who are in the highest heavens; we must not make images of the sun, moon or stars, of birds, or any thing else in the visible heavens. We must not make images of men or beasts, or creeping things, or any thing upon the earth. We must not make images of fishes, sea monsters, or any thing which is in the waters. And then how particularly are all kinds of worship, and all appearances of it, under any pretence whatever, forbidden! "Thou shalt not bow down to them"—whether the homage be to them, or to God through them; whether it be the highest or lowest kind of worship; whether it be respect to them, or mere compliance with the will of others,—whatever it be, thou shalt not on any such account bow down to them, nor shalt thou serve them.

Protestantism itself could not have framed a law more suited to meet the evasions of the superstitious Papist, and it is not at all surprising that, wherever they can with safety, they leave out this divine precept. Next follow the reasons by which the commandment is enforced; and, as the preceptive part, in being so particular, anticipates evasion, does not the argumentative part, in being so terrible, anticipate slight thoughts of the evil of transgression? The first commandment has a respect to the object of worship, the second to the means. And do not multitudes speak as if nothing were of less consequence than the *means* by which God is to be worshipped, the very things to which this commandment has respect? The heart they suppose to be of some importance, but all else indifferent. In their view, it is all the same under what name God is worshipped, and whether the means be such as he has prescribed or what man has invented, and whether indeed they have some appearance of propriety, or are absolutely ridiculous. There could hardly be a greater contrast than exists between the letter and spirit of such reasonings and the letter and spirit of this precept.

It is not, however, our intention to enter upon the consideration of this precept. The remarks made are only intended as introductory to some illustration of the jealousy of God; which, as may subsequently appear, stands in a close and peculiar relation to the sin of idolatry.

1. The jealousy of God implies his covenant relation to the objects of it. It is not simply the Lord, but it is the Lord, *thy God*, who is a jealous God. He is not jealous of those who are neither a believing nor a professing people, but of such as belong to him either really or externally in covenant. This affection of the mind has a respect to those who stand related in marriage, or in some other intimate bonds, and so is used to describe the indignation of God on account of the sins of his people. The sins of those who make no profession, and so are not externally under covenant bonds, are not described as spiritual adultery. This charge is not brought against the heathens, but only against Israel and Judah. It is of them the prophets speak when this charge is made, and these also are intended by Christ, when he speaks of an evil and *adulterous* generation. So God is never said to be jealous of the heathens, and such as never professed to belong to him. Though their iniquities may have cried unto heaven, and wrath may have been poured upon them to the uttermost, yet it was not the wrathful indignation of his jealousy. This cup is peculiar to those who have made a profession; and, as those cannot escape this sore displeasure who truly believe, neither can those who make a profession, yet continue in their enmity to God. The threatening in the second commandment is particularly against those "who hate God," and it is the Lord their God who, as a jealous God, visits their iniquities upon them that hate him. There always will be persons in the church, who profess to love God, and who will show some zeal for his worship, but will not confine themselves to what he has appointed, and, notwithstanding all that they seem to be, the determination of God is that they hate him; and this hatred appears from their opposing his institutions, and introducing their own. And it had been better for such not to have known the way of truth, or named the name of Christ, than thus to turn from the holy commandment, and instead of the common wrath of God, to bring upon them the consuming fire of his jealousy. It is better not to vow, than vow and not pay; better not to worship at all, than worship idolatrously.

2. The jealousy of God is founded upon his love to his church. The terms zeal and jealousy do not mean the same thing in our language; they both denote a strong affection of love, but zeal is love seeking to forward the good of its object in spite of all difficulties and opposition—

jealousy is love enraged by injuries, and seeking revenge. However, this difference does not always appear in the use of these terms in the scriptures, and the reason is, that the term for both is the same in the original of the Old Testament. Accordingly, jealousy in the scriptures is sometimes used in a good sense, and denotes the same as zeal. Thus, Zech. i. 14, the Lord is represented as saying, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion, with a great jealousy," (not against, but for them) "and I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease, for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." Here is jealousy moved by the affliction of its object, and against those who have caused the affliction. The term is used in the same sense, Isa. xlii. 13, and the same word is frequently translated *zeal*; as, for example, in Isa. ix. 7—xxxvii. 32—lxiii. 15, and frequently in the Psalms. Love and jealousy are mentioned together, because the latter is always founded upon the former. Thus, Song viii. 6, "Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave." God hath chosen the church to himself, in much love; he hath forsaken all other nations, that he might cleave to her as a husband to his wife; he hath required that she should be for him, and not for another; that her love to him should be peculiar as his to her; and when she forgets these obligations, and goes after other lovers, he is provoked to jealousy, which is the rage of offended love. This leads us to remark,

3. That the jealousy of God imports his claim to the exclusive regard of his church to him, as her covenant God. We are not jealous of those things which we love, if they be not capable of returning our affection. We may esteem houses and lands, gold and silver, and make them our gods, but we are not jealous of them. Even things capable of affection do not arouse our jealousy, if we regard them not for the sake of their affections. Men may love slaves, servants and subjects for the sake of the profit or honor connected with their authority over them, but if they regard them in no other light, they will not be jealous, because they do not find themselves beloved. In other cases we may desire the affection of an object, and yet not be displeased to find our interest in it shared with many others. A man may have a multitude of friends, and none of them be offended because he shares his esteem with so many others. Even a wife may have friends, and love them devotedly as friends; and yet this, instead of provoking her husband to jealousy, may only increase his affection and confidence. There is never any room for jealousy, unless there be some claim to an exclusive regard, as when a friend transfers to another that confidence to which we thought ourselves exclusively entitled, or when a wife transfers to another that affection which was exclusively due from her as a wife to her husband. The jealousy of God is not, therefore, occasioned by our attachment to other things, when kept in its proper place, but only by our transferring to other things that regard which is due to him as our covenant God. It is occasioned by our valuing other things as a portion in preference to him; by our hearkening to the voice of strangers, and obeying men rather than God; by our loving and serving the creature more than the Creator; and, in a word, in our not being to him for a people, peculiarly and exclusively.—From this it will appear,

4. That the jealousy of God properly relates to matters of worship. It is provoked by any departures from that worship which he has required, either in the forms or spirit of it. "They moved him to jealousy with their graven images." (Ps. lxxviii. 58.) The husband is displeased with other faults in his wife, the parent with other faults in his child, and the friend with other faults in his friend; but they are jealous only when the affection due to them in these relations is given to others. So God

is displeased with all the sins of his people, but jealous only when they give to others that honor and worship which are due to him alone. He is not said to be jealous because men deny his existence, blaspheme his name, profane his Sabbaths, and do many abominable works, but only when they do not worship him in the way appointed in his word. And as this is one of the strongest affections of the mind, and the effects of it are more dreaded than those of any other passion in man, so there is nothing to be more dreaded in God. Nothing, therefore, can be more hateful and offensive than that which provokes him to jealousy. How far, then, are those from reasoning correctly, who suppose particular modes of worship to be almost, or altogether matters of indifference! The Lord tells us that he will be sanctified in all them that draw nigh to him. He will rather pass by any other sins than unholy approaches into his presence. It is often spoken of as of the least consequence, whether we pray in such words as the Spirit may help us to use, or suffer ourselves to be bound down to the use of words prescribed by others; whether we sing in the words which the Spirit has given us, or employ the fruits of the genius of man; whether we dip or sprinkle; whether we follow the modes prescribed in the scriptures, or the customs and traditions of men. Might it not be said, with equal propriety, that it is of little consequence whether the wife obey her husband or a stranger; whether she wear the robes he hath given her, or deck herself in ornaments presented by other lovers, and (if the expression may be allowed) that if she only be fruitful, it is no matter by whom? It is too evident, that we have quite a different way of reasoning about what is due to us, and what is to be rendered to God. Nothing but that which agrees with our orders and comports with our honor will do for us; but as for God, we reason as if he might be thankful to be served in any way which suits our ease and indolence.

5. The jealousy of God is exceedingly terrible. This affection is said to be cruel as the grave—it is the rage of a man—it is the fire of God's anger—it heats the furnace of his wrath seven fold. This moves God to abhor and divorce his people. "They moved him to jealousy with their graven images; when God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;" and he says, in relation to his idolatrous church, "Plead with your mother, plead, for she is not my wife." This moves him to visit the sins of fathers upon the children, and to cry, yea, roar against his enemies. It is on this account that he is so often represented as a consuming fire: "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." (Deut. iv. 24.) "Let us," says the apostle, (Heb. xii. 28, 29,) "have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire." This is not said of God as an absolute or uncovenanted God, nor of those who pay no regard to his worship, but it is said of our *our God*, and shows us what he is to them who worship him without "reverence and godly fear." It is this fire which purifies his church in the way of judgment, and burus up his enemies round about. This consumed Nadab and Abihu, and devoured the whole land of Israel. "The Lord is jealous and revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance of his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies." When sin is described because nothing worse can be said of it than to attribute to it the fullness of its own character, it is said to be "sin which is exceeding sinful;" and when the jealousy of God is described, because nothing more terrible can be said, he is simply said to be a jealous God. "Thou shalt worship no other God; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Ex. xxxiv. 14.)

The terribleness of the divine jealousy will appear mere fully, if we consider some of its effects or manifestations.

1. We see something of the divine jealousy in the care taken in his law to prevent that which might provoke it. As a jealous husband would at the same time endeavor to provide for the comfort of his wife at home and guard against her wandering away, so God has fully furnished us in his word, leaving nothing to be desired and provided for by human wisdom; and he hath placed his jealousy as a flaming sword to guard the way to his altar. Many and fearful curses are denounced against those who will venture to add to the words of the law, or to take any thing away.

2. We see the same jealousy of God in the work of our redemption; particularly in our not being permitted to approach to God directly, but only through Christ as our Mediator. We are allowed to use the freedom and boldness of children, yet are reminded by this ordinance that he to whom we come is a mighty King, jealous of his honor, and not to be trifled with in matters of worship.

3. The jealousy of God is manifested in the names which he gives to idols. They are vanities, lies, nothings, devils, abominations. Sometimes, as he will not name sin, but calls it "that abominable thing," so he will not take the names of idols into his lips. Doctor Lightfoot has noticed some singular instances of the changes of the names of men who were called by the names of idols. Jerub-baal is called Jerubbesheth, and Esh-baal, the son of Saul, is called Ish-bosheth; Baal, the name of a heathen god, being changed to Besheth or Bosheth, which signifies *shame*. He also notices the omission of the tribes of Ephraim and Dan, and the substitution of Joseph and Manasses, in the account of the sealed ones, Rev. vii. It was in the two former tribes that idolatry commenced. Micah was a man of Mount Ephraim, and the men of Dan stole away his gods, and set them up in their own land. Jeroboam was also of Ephraim, and set up the golden calves in Bethel of Ephraim and in Dan. Therefore the names of these tribes are omitted, as a testimony of God's displeasure against them. In the same way the above writer accounts for the omission of the names of Joram's sons to the third and fourth generation in the genealogy of our Lord, by Matthew.

4. We may notice also the punishments which God has brought upon the immediate actors in idolatry. The second commandment does not at all imply that they shall escape, and their children suffer, but both fathers and children shall suffer. When Israel transgressed by making the golden calf, God, according to the spirit of his law respecting jealousy, made the people to drink of the bitter water which causeth the curse, by giving them the water of the brook, mingled with the dust of their idol. And as God had engaged to work a miracle for the detection of the adulterous wife, so the Jews say that similar effects were produced by this water upon the guilty, by which they were pointed out to Phinehas and his companions. The time would fail to point out all the judgments inflicted upon gross idolaters. There is perhaps no offence which has been more uniformly punished. Even his most precious saints have been subjected to dreadful tokens of divine displeasure, for what might seem to us very slight departures from divine institutions. The sons of Aaron might have been guilty of many offences more aggravated in the sight of men; they are generally supposed to have been drunk with wine at the time when they offended by this offering, yet it was not for their drunkenness or any other offence, but for their offering with strange fire, that the Lord destroyed them. Moses sinned in his unwillingness to go to Egypt, and no doubt in many other things, yet none of his other sins debarred him from the promised land, but only his changing a divine ordinance, by smiting the rock to which he was commanded to speak. Uzzah must have been a very upright man, if nothing in his life would

appear more evil in human reckoning than his unadvised zeal in taking hold of the ark when it was shaken; yet it was for this error that the Lord smote him so that he died there by the ark. Saul was a tyrannical and bloody king, yet it was for offering sacrifice without authority to do so, and not for things generally considered more abominable, that he forfeited the kingdom. Moses, Aaron and Samuel were chiefs in Israel—Moses first of their kings, Aaron first of their priests, and Samuel first of their prophets. They were chiefs in their fidelity, and in the favor of God. They called on God, and he answered them, even in the very instances in which they were offending him; he also pardoned them, yet he took vengeance upon their inventions; and we are thus assured that God will not spare the dearest of his saints, much less accept them when they follow inventions of their own.

5. The jealousy of God also appears in his punishing future generations for the idolatry of the parents; and this punishment is not limited to the third or fourth generation. A definite appears to be used in this threatening for an indefinite time. When Israel had sinned by making the calf, God said without limitation, "In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them;" and Stephen shows, Acts vii. 41, 42, that this sin was visited far beyond both the third and fourth generations. It was visited upon them in the time of Hosea, and the Jews own that there is some remembrance of it in all their afflictions. In respect to other offences, we do not find the period of punishment limited. The sword was never to depart from the house of David. All the righteous blood shed from the foundation of the world was to be visited upon that generation of the Jews who crucified the Lord of glory. The sin of the builders of Babel is visited on the world to the present day, in the confusion of tongues. And reasoning from analogy, there is good ground to conclude that the effects of the divine jealousy may be equally prolonged. Our limits will not admit of a full vindication of the rectitude of such dispensations. The most of the following hints are abridged from an ingenious dissertation on the subject. The visiting of the sins of parents on their children is a just punishment of the parents in those who are so near to them. The punishment is upon the children who hate God, "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children of them that hate him," implies that both parents and children hate him. This is what God asserts his right to do, but not what he holds himself bound to do in all cases. If we examine instances of such punishments, we will find that while the parents were punished for their sins in their children, the children had merited the punishment by their own sins. For example: the sons of Eli and of David were punished for their own sins, yet the parents also were punished in their children. Where the judgment of God even visits a righteous child for the sin of a wicked parent, the punishment of the parent is vindictory, but in the case of the child, fatherly. The son of Jeroboam was cut off: this was a sore judgment on his father and the people, but it was a mercy to the young man to be taken away from the evils to which he would have been exposed, had he lived.

The conclusion to which these remarks should lead us, is to abominate idolatry of every kind, if it be proper to speak of kinds where there is no real difference. If we forsake the worship of the Creator for the creature, it is little matter what that creature is; whether it be saint or angel, beast or devil; and whether it be the work of our hands or the work of our minds. The reason showing the absurdity of idolatry holds equally good against every thing of human manufacture. We have made it—wherefore, then, should we worship it? Nor let it be said we do not worship the things which we invent. So said the heathens of their images; they

professed to employ them only as helps to devotion, yet we find that they learned to attach a superstitious veneration to the images themselves—and it is so still, in respect to the inventions of men. We can stand up for divine ordinances without defending their intrinsic excellence; we can plead for preaching, though it be foolishness, and for the sacraments, though they have no earthly glory or beauty; but wherever divine authority is abandoned, the plea of excellence is substituted, and men show a disposition to worship the work of their own hands. But, whether the images and inventions of men be gold or silver, wood or stone, let us not fall down before them. Let us seek grace, that we may serve God with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.

T. B.

ART. II. *A Plea against Restrictions of Privilege in Prayer.*

A writer who, by his manner, his power, or the value of his sentiments, gains our approbation, engages our attention, and excites in our minds a lively interest in his subject and his cause, is peculiarly dangerous, if he slide into error while he leads our investigations. Before we are aware, we yield him our confidence, and in a measure entrust our judgment and conscience to his guidance. If he correct our errors, we perhaps yield them; if he condemn our sound sentiments, we are tempted to renounce them; or, if experience has taught us that they are precious, we feel wounded by his reproofs, and our conscience is disquieted. Such feelings have been produced by a series of papers in the 10th and 11th volumes of the Religious Monitor, under the title of "DOUBTFUL EXPRESSIONS CONSIDERED." The author shows himself a lover of the precious doctrines of free grace, and exhibits such views of faith, that it is painful to dissent from his applications and conclusions. But, though his views of faith are correct, some of his applications are very questionable. In one of his papers under the above title, contained in the April No. of vol. 11th, he condemns certain expressions in prayer, which it is hoped he will reconsider, and admit to be authorized, in their substance, in the word of God. The expressions referred to, are prayers for *effectual calling, regeneration, justification, adoption, and union to Christ*. These he utterly condemns as unwarrantable in prayer. Month after month has elapsed, disappointing the hope that some of the fathers in the church would take up these important matters, either to establish more fully our author's sentiments, if correct, or to point out his mistakes, if he be in error. These matters are of the utmost practical importance, and demand our most careful attention. The believer's thoughts and affections are daily concerned in them, not only in study, but in one of the most important, and one of the dearest exercises of his soul, in his addresses at a throne of grace. If in error in the matter of his prayer, he desires immediate correction, that he may not approach God with unwarranted petitions; and if correct, it is both painful and injurious that his conscience should be disquieted by doubts respecting his duty or his liberty, in his addresses to God. If our author's sentiments on the points in question be judged correct, many Christians will find their exercises in prayer seriously checked, their subjects of prayer much limited, and their mouths shut, on many things, before God, which they most earnestly desire, and on which they had formerly enjoyed much liberty. Nor will their disquietude end here; for, in reflecting on the reasons given for excluding the

subjects specified, they will find that they must exclude still more, till their errands to a throne of grace may become few and doubtful. For such reasons, the following thoughts are offered, which may perhaps elicit further and instructive discussion.

That the expressions condemned by our author may be used in prayer for others, we presume is not disputed; but whether we may use them for *ourselves*, is the whole question. Nor is it the *form* of the condemned expressions that is in dispute, but their substance. This is what our author condemns as unwarrantable in prayer, and this is what we would defend as warrantable. Besides, that we may not contend about words, in mutual misapprehension, it may be observed in the preliminaries, that we should not ask *effectual calling, regeneration, &c.* with the desire or expectation that these blessings should be formally bestowed a second time. No doctrine is admissible, which would suppose a second bestowal of these gifts necessary: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." And if this were all that our author intended, the question would here rest; but he forbids these subjects of prayer in every case, for ourselves. He forbids them to the unbeliever, because he cannot pray in faith; he forbids them to the believer, because he has them in possession already; because his prayer for them would be a denial of his possession of them—a denial of his filial relation to God, and an approach to him as a wrathful Judge. This reasoning, therefore, forbids absolutely our prayers for these things for ourselves, in any case, and under any circumstances. More, therefore, is meant, than that we should not ask these blessings with the expectation that they shall be formally conferred a second time. The question, then, is, should any person ask in prayer for himself, or for others *with him*, the blessings of *effectual calling, regeneration, justification, adoption, or union to Christ*? In supporting the affirmative of this question, we shall first appeal to scripture authority, and next answer objections. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Holy scripture teaches both the matter and the manner of prayer. It is the matter of prayer alone that is at present in question. On this point the Westminster divines lay down, from holy scripture, the rule that we should ask of God "things agreeable to his will." As we trust this rule will not be disputed, so we shall not argue it. The question will next arise, how shall we know what is agreeable to God's will? Moses answers this question, Deut. xxix. 29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Accordingly, the Westminster divines say, "The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer." Our author pleads that such prayers as he condemns are not exemplified in holy scripture in the prayers recorded there, and thence argues that they are not warranted in scripture.—Though we hope to show that such prayers are recorded in scripture, yet at present it may be observed, that while recorded examples of prayer are a happy means of instruction, they are rather *specimens* of the application of doctrines and promises, than a full exhibition of our warrant. Examples are therefore not the only source of information on this subject. It is in the doctrines and promises of holy scripture, that we are to expect the full instructions of the word. And were we to argue the present question fully, we would refer particularly to the doctrines, promises and commands, as well as examples of holy scripture, as teaching us the matter and warrants for prayer; but to avoid prolixity, we shall confine ourselves to a very brief view of the *promises* and *examples* of scripture on these points.

First, the *promises* of holy scripture afford a sufficient warrant for prayers for regeneration, justification, &c. To establish this position, two things are necessary: 1. To show that the promises contain the blessings in question, and, 2. To show that they do warrant us to pray for the things that they contain. Neither of these points will need much discussion; and if a contrary position had not biassed the mind, we think no discussion whatever would be requisite.

1. That the promises *contain the blessings in question*, will appear by the following passages: Ezek. xxxvi. 26, is a promise of regeneration: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." To the same purpose, read Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. A promise of justification we have in Isa. xlv. 25: "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." To the same purpose, read Rom. iii. 25: iv. 23—25: x. 4. Adoption is promised, 2 Cor. vi. 18: "And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In connection with this, read Gal. iv. 4, 5. Union to Christ is promised in Isa. xlv. 25, already quoted. But as "all the promises of God in him (Christ) are yea, and in him amen," so they all include a promise of union to Christ. Perhaps it may be objected, in order to evade the conclusion to which we are approaching, that these promises do not intend the first application of salvation to the soul, but only increase of grace, and manifestations of fatherly love. We reply, that this objection will not be made, except by those who deny that there is, in the gospel, a free and full salvation presented to us; or by those who have a favorite hypothesis to support. We ask, if these promises do not offer to us regeneration, justification, adoption &c., are there any others that contain these blessings? If there are, we plead them, and our object is attained; if there are not, we further ask, where shall we find an inducement and warrant for the sinner to believe and return to the Lord? And how shall the objector avoid falling into the error, that the promises are all to qualified sinners, and to none else? We trust it is evident that the promises do contain the blessings in question. But we have to show,

2dly. That the promises contain a *warrant* for prayer for the blessings contained in them. For this purpose take the example of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 9, 11, 12. "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." These promises, pleaded by Jacob, were the only ground of his hope in distress: on these grounds he wrestled with God, and prevailed; and on these grounds he not only believed, but prayed, affording an example of the promise taken as the warrant for prayer. Of the same thing the Psalmist has given us many examples: as Ps. cxix. 25, "Quicken thou me according to thy word; verse 28, "Strengthen thou me according to thy word;" verse 38, "Establish thy word unto thy servant." The frequency of such a prayer is familiar to every careful reader of the Bible. We shall refer to but one passage more on this point. Ezek. xxxvi. 22—37 contains many free promises, and declares that, for this, God "will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them;" shewing, unquestionably, that the promises are given in order to furnish not only the warrant for faith, but for prayer. As, then, the promises of holy scripture contain the blessings of regeneration, justification, adoption, and

union to Christ, and furnish the warrant to pray for those things which they contain, the conclusion is inevitable, that prayer for these blessings is warranted.

But it is denied that we have scripture examples of such prayers, and it is therefore inferred that they are not warranted. If this denial were correct, it would afford strong ground to suspect that we had somehow taken an unfair view of the promises, as warranting such prayers; but if it appear that we have scripture examples of such prayers, our view of the promises will be decisively maintained; for scripture example is clear evidence of the correct application of scripture doctrines and promises. We therefore propose to show that we have examples of prayers for the blessings in question. But, to treat the subject as briefly as a substantial exhibition of the truth will allow, and to avoid the tediousness of all the divisions and subdivisions which it would afford or require in a full discussion, we shall limit our attention chiefly to one of the specified subjects of prayer, and not adduce examples on them all distinctly; because it is evident that the principles and arguments which would condemn or defend one of them, would condemn or defend the others. This too, is obviously our author's view, as he classes them together, and applies the same general arguments to them all. The petition that we shall select for exemplification, is prayer for justification. And the first example that we shall adduce, is from that form of prayer commonly called the Lord's prayer, and particularly the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" that is, "forgive us our sins." (Luke xi. 4.) Now, as far as human judgment should have weight with us in ascertaining the meaning of holy scripture, we may take the mind of the Westminster Assembly on this petition. They say, (shorter Catechism) "In the fifth petition, we pray that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon *all* our sins;" that is, sins original and actual; and so Fisher explains it. Moreover, in the Larger Catechism, the Westminster Assembly say, "In the fifth petition, we pray that God would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his beloved," &c. And this they state as contained in this petition, besides prayer for pardon of daily failings, and increasing evidence of forgiveness.

But it may be objected, that there is a distinction between pardon and justification. We grant there is, but it is a distinction which admits no separation. Whatever forensic distinction there may be between pardon and justification, God never pardons without justification, through union to Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." And the apostle, in treating expressly of justification, joins them together, Rom. iii. 25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." Here our pardon, or remission of sins, is ascribed to the righteousness of Christ, and in the following verse is viewed as the same with justification: "That he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." No sin is pardoned to any person, not even to the believer, but through the justifying righteousness of Christ imputed to him. Therefore, in asking for pardon, we must in every case ask it for the sake of the justifying righteousness of Christ; and so all the examples in holy scripture, of prayer for pardon, are to be understood. So Daniel prayed, ix. 18, 19: "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God." Here Daniel plainly admits that a righteousness is necessary in order to acceptance and forgiveness; he renounces their own; he therefore pleads the righteousness of Christ, under the

appellation of God's *great mercies*. Pardon and justification, then, are never separated; nor should we ask them separately from one another, nor separately from the righteousness of Christ, on the ground of which, alone, they are bestowed. Justification, therefore, is included in the example of prayer given in the fifth petition, and in that given by Daniel, to which we have adverted.

Perhaps it may be objected, that the believer's sins are pardoned on account of his former justification, and therefore that justification should not be asked in prayer. We grant the certainty of the consequence, that he who has been once justified shall obtain pardon for all his sins; but we do not admit that he is pardoned because of his former justification, as the formal ground of it. He is pardoned only on account of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him. In justification, indeed, *all* our sins are pardoned, past, present and future, so that we cannot fall into condemnation; yet this does not annul the duty of asking pardon, nor the duty of asking it on account of that righteousness which justifies us. The language of Paul, Acts xiii. 38, 39, is worthy of particular notice, in application to this point. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Here the apostle makes forgiveness and justification equivalent, and shows that from every particular sin we need *justification* through Christ, and therefore that we should ask it, in asking forgiveness.

But it is objected, that it is fatherly pardon only that is asked in the fifth petition, or in other prayers for pardon recorded in holy scripture; and that by fatherly pardon we are to understand, a removal of fatherly displeasure, and of the evidence of it, and a restoration of his gracious countenance. But is it certainly fatherly pardon that is here asked, to the exclusion of legal pardon, or justification? To plead that it is exclusive of legal pardon, or justification, is to assume what is denied, and is but begging the question, which we cannot yield on such terms, to shut our mouths and renounce our privileges for a mere assumption. Besides the evidences already adduced, we appeal to other examples of prayer in support of our position.

The second example which we cite, is Ps. xxv. 7: "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy, remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord." It will be cordially admitted by all who possess a due degree of theological intelligence, that the Old Testament saints intended, by the *mercy* of God, and his *goodness' sake*, his mercy in Christ. Therefore the Psalmist here pleads for pardon through the righteousness of Christ. He deprecates the judgment due for his sins of youth, and therefore pleads an acquittal from them through Christ. In this case, the Psalmist pleads for acquittal, or justification from sins long past, and from which, as a believer, he had been justified before, or from which, through the weakness of his faith, he feared that he had never been justified. A person may in any case, indeed, fall under fatherly displeasure for the sins of his youth, from which he had been justified, and of which he had repented; it is, assuredly, a frequent occurrence that the believer falls under a sense of God's displeasure against him for such sins, and into fears that they are still standing against him; and here we have an example of the believer rising above these fears, by a renewed application to the blood of Christ, and an appropriation of the free justifying grace of God.

As a third example, we cite Psalm li.: in verses 1, 2, 9, 14, the Psalmist pleads for pardon; and in verses 3, 4, 5, he acknowledges the sins for which he pleads forgiveness. Among the sins of which he pleads the

pardon, we find him, in the 5th verse, acknowledging original sin: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." As we are not proposing, at present, to meet the Arminian in our argument, we shall take it for granted, that the sin here acknowledged is not only the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of our whole nature, but also the *guilt of Adam's first transgression*. From this sin the Psalmist pleads acquittal, or justification, through the righteousness of Christ, which is plainly his plea in this Psalm. He gives strong evidence that he was under fears that this sin was still standing against him; and for every one who may fall under similar fears, the example is here given of rising above them, by a renewed appropriation of the righteousness of Christ for justification, and for purging the conscience, as pleaded, verse 7th: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;" with which compare Heb. ix. 14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

The fourth example we cite, is Ps. vi. 1: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger." This is a prayer against wrath and condemnation, and therefore a prayer for justification and legal pardon. There is no medium between condemnation and justification; and a prayer against the one, is a prayer for the other. Besides, all the arguments yet advanced to prove the impropriety of prayer for justification, apply with equal force against a prayer for exemption from wrath and condemnation; but we see the Psalmist here uses such a prayer.

The fifth example we adduce, is Ps. cxliii. 1, 2: "Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplication: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." It will surely not be denied that the Psalmist is here speaking of justification. In the second verse he deprecates judgment; and, as observed on the preceding example, there is no medium between judgment and justification, nor between a deprecation of the one, and a prayer for the other. Nor can it be pleaded that judgment here may signify correction only; for the judgment deprecated is explained in the next clause, by the reason given why it is deprecated: "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. It is therefore condemnation that the Psalmist is pleading against, and he uses nearly the language, and fully the sense of the apostle, on legal justification and judgment, in Rom. iii. 20—24. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets," (of which the Psalmist in this Psalm is one;) "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." So the Psalmist, in this prayer, not only pleads against judgment, or condemnation, and prays for justification, but prays for all this on the ground of Christ's righteousness: ver. 1, "in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness." Thus the Psalmist here pleads Christ's righteousness, and so is one of the prophets to which the apostle alludes, as witnessing this righteousness of God. Thus it is evident that the Psalmist is pleading for a legal justification before God. Psalm cxxx. 3, 4, might be cited to the same purpose; but it is so nearly a parallel with the passage which we have just now examined, that we shall pass it without further remark.

We shall adduce but one example more on this point, as a direct prayer. It is the case of the publican, recorded Luke xviii. 13, 14: "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sin-

ner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other." Here, assuredly, legal pardon, or justification through the mercy of God, is sought in prayer, and the prayer is accepted. The publican evidently considered himself as guilty, dependent for justification on free mercy, and consequently, as it was the mercy of justification which he was convinced that he needed, for this he prayed, and this our Lord declares he received. It ought to be observed, further, that this account of the publican is a parable, and therefore not intended as a simple narrative, but as a general case, descriptive of the sinner's acceptable approach to God in seeking pardon or justification.

These are some of the examples which may be adduced, as warranting our prayers for justification, or legal pardon, as well as for fatherly forgiveness. And we have spent the more time on the subject of justification, as we do not intend to pursue the argument, to any length, on any of the other subjects of prayer in question; and because, to establish the propriety of any one of these, is to establish the propriety of them all.

It may not be amiss, however, to adduce, by way of specimen, one or two passages as authority for prayer for some of the other subjects in question.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26, contains the promise of the new heart and spirit; this is a promise of regeneration, or effectual calling, and, as we have seen, the promise lays the warrant for prayer for the blessings which it contains. But verse 37th expressly declares that for this, with other things there promised, God "will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them;" that is, God will be enquired of for regeneration or effectual calling.

To prove the same thing, we shall quote Ps. li. 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." We are aware that it will be objected, that these promises and examples of prayer signify only the increase of grace. We exceedingly regret that the riches and preciousness of these and similar texts, should be so frittered away, to serve a purpose and save a theory, and their encouragements and comforts snatched from the awakened sinner and the trembling child of God. In the latter text, the blessing asked is the *creation* of a clean heart, and the *renewal* of a right spirit. What stronger expressions have we in the word of God, in doctrines or promises, for regeneration or effectual calling? And if these texts afford encouragement and direction to the believer, who is under the assurance of faith, and who is seeking only an increase of grace, as indeed they do, why deny their full amount, as an inducement to the unbeliever to turn to God, and as an encouragement to the awakened sinner and to the trembling child of God, to hope in his mercy? If we deny that these texts contain a promise of regeneration, or a plea for it, where shall we go to find gospel instructions or encouragements on such a point, for persuading the unbeliever to embrace a gospel hope, or for refreshing the weary? If these do not contain encouragement to appropriating faith for the blessings of regeneration, we despair of finding any in the Bible. Or shall we point out these texts as warrants for appropriating faith, but warn the sinner not to ask the blessing contained in them? These passages fully maintain the idea advanced in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, on the second petition, that we, in that petition, pray that we may be brought into God's kingdom of grace; that is, that we may be effectually called. And, though our author argues that the Assembly did not intend to maintain this doctrine, as they express no such idea in the larger Catechism, we think they did intend to hold this doctrine; and we find it expressed, too, in the Larger Catechism: thus, "In the second petition, acknowledging ourselves, by na-

ture, under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed." This directs us to pray that the dominion of sin and Satan over us may be destroyed, which surely includes regeneration. Fisher, too, maintains our doctrine, notwithstanding our author's denial, as will be seen particularly, in his 31st and 32d questions on the second petition.

It appears, then, that the promises of holy scripture offer to us the blessings of regeneration, justification, adoption, and union to Christ, and warrant our prayers for them, and that the examples of prayer recorded for our instruction, maintain the same thing; and therefore, that it is our duty to pray for these blessings. But though the above arguments might be sufficient to establish our view of the subject, yet as the theoretic arguments offered against it are plausible and imposing, we shall attend a little more particularly to them.

It may be objected, that the scripture promises and examples adduced cannot be correctly understood as warranting our prayers for the blessings in question, because we cannot ask acceptably in unbelief, and if we are believers, we are already in possession of these blessings; and, therefore, to ask them is to suppose we are destitute of them, and to ask them under such a supposition, is to approach God as a wrathful judge, which is unbelief. These, if we mistake not, are the arguments advanced against the petitions condemned, and these demand our further attention, in order to show that they do not invalidate our arguments, drawn from holy scripture, in favor of such petitions.

It is freely admitted that we cannot ask acceptably in unbelief; that we ought not to approach God as a wrathful judge, because it is an approach in unbelief; and that, if we are believers, we are in possession of the blessings in question. But we deny that to ask such blessings always supposes that we are destitute of them, and that to ask them, even under such a supposition, is necessarily an unbelieving approach to God as a wrathful judge. The whole question, therefore, at present, is on these two points. We think the scripture evidences already advanced decisively support our position. But in order to a further elucidation of the subject, and a removal of the difficulties set up by the above objections, we shall consider the question before us in application to three classes of supplicants: 1. To the believer under assurance of his interest in Christ; 2. To the believer in doubts of his interest in Christ; and, 3. To the unbeliever, who fears, or even knows that he is not in Christ.

1. With respect to the believer under assurance. As we assert that he ought to pray for the blessings in question, the query will arise, how can he ask such blessings without denying his possession of them, and approaching God as a wrathful judge? We reply, (1.) It is the believer's duty, though under the assurance of possession, still to appropriate to himself all the blessings of salvation, even regenerating, justifying, adopting grace. So it appears evidently the apostle Paul did, while under assurance, as we see from Phil. iii. 8, 9: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Here is assuredly appropriation of Christ, of union to him, and of his justifying righteousness. It is true, in a subsequent verse, he says he is not "already perfect;" but this expression refers not so much to his confidence, as to his sanctification, of which he desires the progress. We see, however, that he appropriates Christ, union to him, and his justifying righteousness, as his method of obtaining progressive sanctification. We see, from the apostle's exercise in this passage, that the believer under assurance ought still to appropriate Christ and his

justifying righteousness, as the way of enjoying the continuance of gracious supplies—as the way of attaining the fruits of justification, &c.—as the way of keeping up his sense of dependence on God and his grace for all his supplies, and of acknowledging this dependence. Moreover, the believer, though justified, ought still to appropriate Christ and his righteousness, as the ground of his continued standing in God's favor, and as the ground of his daily acquittal from the guilt of his daily sins. So it appears the Psalmist desired and appropriated the righteousness of Christ for his daily acquittal, Ps. cxliii., already quoted. Besides, we ought to remember that the believer's assured possession of the blessings of justification, regeneration, &c. does not change his ground of faith, hope or prayer, from what it was before believing. As a regenerated or justified person, he has no higher, and no other claim to salvation, pardon, sanctification, &c. than the unbeliever has. To the believer and unbeliever alike, the only ground of hope is the free grace of God in Christ, and their warrant alike, is the promise. The believer's possession of such blessings is encouraging, comforting, and a ground of the highest gratitude, but not the ground of faith in the grace and mercy of God; and therefore he ought to appropriate to himself the only ground of hope, Christ and his justifying righteousness, and justification through the imputation of this righteousness to him. Perhaps it will be said, all this is granted, but what is this to the question in hand? We reply,

(2.) As the believer under assurance ought to appropriate to himself the blessings of justification, regeneration, &c., so he ought to desire them and pray for them. Let it be particularly observed, that appropriation of the blessings of salvation necessarily includes desire of them, and desire directed to God for them. Now desire directed to God is the essence of prayer, and actual, formal prayer, is always as much warranted as desire is. No argument can be brought against prayer, which does not apply with equal force against both appropriation and prayer. Does prayer suppose that we are destitute of the blessings prayed for? Surely appropriation and desire suppose the same want. Does prayer, even on such a supposition, approach God as a wrathful judge? Surely appropriation and desire must approach in the same manner. As, then, appropriation and desire are the duty of the believer still, though under assured possession of the blessings desired, so it is his duty to pray for them. And, as appropriation and desire of justification, &c. do not necessarily suppose the want of these blessings, neither does prayer; and, as appropriation and desire of these blessings may be exercised, without viewing God as a wrathful judge, so may believing prayer; and for every purpose and for every reason, for which we may exercise appropriation, and desire of justification, regeneration, &c., for the same purposes and reasons we may exercise prayer. Therefore the believer, under assured possession of justification, regeneration, &c., ought to pray for these blessings, as the way of enjoying the continuance of gracious supplies, and of attaining their fruits. His prayer for these blessings will be a means of keeping up a sense of dependence on God and his grace for them, and a means of acknowledging that dependence. He ought to pray for justification and union to Christ, as the grounds of his continued standing in God's favor, and the grounds of his daily acquittal from the guilt of his daily sins.

2. With respect to the believer who is justified, regenerated, adopted, and united to Christ, but doubts his possession of these blessings, we remark, that he ought to pray for them, for all the reasons for which the believer under assurance ought to ask them. But besides, he ought to ask these blessings in order that he may attain that assurance of interest in them which he desires. And this view agrees with the scripture ex-

amples already quoted. It is agreed by sound practical writers, that while we have not assurance of our union to Christ, of our justification, adoption, &c. by self examination, the safest way, yea, and our imperious duty, is to essay the exercise of appropriating faith, on the ground of the promise, as though we had never believed before. And this we ought to do, that our faith may rest on the promise, and not on possession; that we may draw from the promise what we cannot draw from grace already received; and because in every case this appropriation is our duty, as in every case, whether interested already in Christ or not, we have precisely the same ground of faith. So we are taught, Heb. x. 21, 22: "And having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Here the believer, as well as the unbeliever, and the believer under full assurance, as well as the believer under doubts, is required to draw near with full assurance of faith—of faith, appropriating what? Christ as his high priest, acceptance through him, and the particular promised blessings for which, at any time, he applies. Now, according to a former remark, as it is the doubting believer's duty to appropriate justification, union to Christ, &c., so it is his duty to desire these blessings, and to pray for them.

3. With respect to the unbeliever, who fears or who knows that he is not in Christ, we observe, that for all the reasons why the *believer* ought to pray for the blessings in question, *he* ought also to pray for them; and besides, he ought, not only for these reasons, to pray for these blessings, but also in order to obtain that interest in them which he has not. His ground of faith and acceptance is the same with that of the believer, which is Christ in the promise. When we speak of the unbeliever's duty of prayer, we do not mean that he should pray in unbelief, but that under a discovery of his necessities, and of the gracious provisions of the gospel, he ought to arise to faith's appropriation, desire and prayer for that justification, union to Christ, regeneration and adoption, which are freely made over to him in the promise. In proof of this, we refer to Heb. x. 21, 22, already quoted. It will perhaps be objected, that this and such texts are warrants for the believer already united to Christ, to come for blessings consequent on union to Christ, justification, adoption, &c., but that they do not warrant the unbeliever to return to God, and to come in faith for these blessings themselves. We are aware that such suppositions are common among professors of religion, but it is to be exceedingly regretted that such notions should have place in the minds of gospel hearers, and still more that they should be encouraged. Such opinions are certainly limiting the riches and freeness of divine grace, setting up the barriers of pre-requisite qualifications, to the discouragement of the convinced sinner, and to the encouragement of legalism, and taking away the free gospel offer from the unbeliever. This and such texts certainly do warrant the believer to come for blessings consequent on justification, but they as certainly do warrant the unbeliever to come in the exercise of appropriating faith for every blessing contained in the gospel promise. They do warrant the believer and the unbeliever equally, to come with appropriation, desire and prayer, and on the same ground—the free gospel promise.

But perhaps it may be objected, that the passage under consideration, with others of similar import, proposes our *actual interest* in Christ as our high priest, as the ground of our approach to God with assurance—and therefore, that none can come with assurance unless they have found that they had previously obtained a saving interest in Christ. But we decidedly reject this supposition. It is not because we have an actual interest in Christ, and are already justified, that we should come with assurance: but because we have him in the promise made over to us as

ours. If such qualifications are *necessary* to warrant our faith's approach and appropriation, what are these texts to the unbeliever? and where shall we find a ground of faith for him? Where shall we find gospel encouragement and persuasion to lay before him? Such texts, then, lay before the unbeliever the ground of faith, and persuasives to believe. If enlightened and persuaded by them, he then approves of Christ as his high priest, of union to him, of justification and acceptance by him, and of every blessing in him, proposed in the gospel, and he desires and appropriates to himself Christ and all these blessings in him, on the ground of the promise alone, or because Christ is made over to him freely as his high priest.

Perhaps it is granted, that the unbeliever should awake to a faith's approbation, desire and appropriation of Christ, of justification, adoption, &c., but still he should not pray for them. Let us for a moment contemplate this position. Let us suppose a gospel minister, in his public discussions and exhortations, or in his private dealings with the sinner, thus address him: On the ground of the free gospel offer alone, and before you find any recommending qualification in yourself, as the only way of attaining the graces which you desire, you ought to approve of Christ as offered to you freely in the promise; you ought to approve of free justification by his righteousness, and of union to him; you ought to consent to the gift of Christ, and desire him to be yours; yea, you ought to appropriate to yourself Christ and his righteousness, justifying and regenerating grace, and on the ground of the promise, assure yourself of all that it contains; but do not, in all this exercise, venture to pray for the things which you appropriate—for union to Christ, for justification, for regeneration or adoption: this desire and this appropriation must pass in your mind in silence, for an expression of them in prayer would be unbelief, and an address to God as a wrathful judge. He is far gone under the influence of metaphysical theory, who would give such an advice; but what else could he give, admitting the duty of appropriation, and forbidding prayer? We believe that the sinner, enlightened and persuaded by the Holy Spirit to desire and appropriate Christ and the blessings promised in him, could not well be restrained from expressing his desires in prayer to God as his Father. We freely grant, that the believer should not deny the gifts he has received by free grace; that it is unbelief and unacceptable to address God as a wrathful judge, and that we ought always to address him as a Father; but we have already seen, that the believer may ask the blessings of justification, regeneration, &c., without denying his actual interest in them, and in such prayers address God as a Father. And if any doubt the correctness of these views still, we ask him to show how he will acquit the Psalmist of unbelief, and of denying the gifts he had received, when in Ps. cxliii. 1, 2, he prays for justification through God's righteousness, and deprecates judgment on his own deeds? And we further ask, does our faith in our welcome to Christ—does our appropriation of his justifying righteousness—does our acceptance of Christ and his blessings, indeed apprehend God as a wrathful judge? Do we not rather, in such exercises, necessarily view him as a Father? And if so, how shall a prayer dictated by such faith, corresponding to, and accompanying such exercises, be a rejection of God as a Father, and an approach to him as a wrathful judge? And how is it lawful to desire and appropriate these blessings, and not lawful to ask them? Would not such a prohibition naturally inspire a servile fear and unbelief? And would not a conviction of such a prohibition banish that confidence in God, and that liberty of a child with a Father, which it is the privilege of the believer to exercise and enjoy? Must he not dare to ask of God, as his Father, those blessings which he appropriates and so

much desires? But if any principle of the gospel or precept of the law forbids prayer for such blessings, why not forbid desire also? For, assuredly, if it be the working of unbelief to pray for them, it is as much the working of unbelief to desire them; because desire and appropriation as really and fully suppose that we are destitute of them as prayer does. And if prayer suppose us destitute of the blessings desired, and if it lead us, on that account, to approach God as a wrathful judge, desire and appropriation do the same. On such arguments, then, forbidding prayer, we are forbidden the exercises of desire and appropriation, on the consideration that they suppose us destitute of the blessings desired; and therefore desire and appropriation are unbelief, and a denial of our relation to God as a Father; that is, the very exercises of faith are essentially unbelief, because they suppose us destitute of the blessings desired. This is sufficiently absurd to induce us to reject the principles which terminate in such conclusions. Moreover, what different warrants have we, in the word of God, for the exercises of desire, appropriation and prayer? What difference is there in the nature and spirit of these exercises, which should in any case allow the one and exclude the other? or what is there implied in the one which is not implied in the other, that there should be a proscription of the one and an admission of the other?

But perhaps, in order to save a theory, it may be said, if desire, appropriation and prayer do equally suppose us under condemnation, and destitute of a justifying righteousness, then they all view God as a wrathful judge, and, exercised in such a manner, they are all unhallowed approaches, and unacceptable. We reply, it is not necessary to an approach to God as a Father, that we were formerly his children, and justified, nor that we had discovered such a relation existing. If this were necessary, the unbeliever could never have a ground of faith, since faith is, in the order of nature, necessary to such a state, and to such a discovery. He must, on such a supposition, be shut up in unbelief, by an impassable barrier, which even the free grace of God will never remove; for God will bestow faith only in the way of leading the mind to embrace a promise. The real ground of the error which we are opposing, we are persuaded, is the supposition that the exercise of faith consists in the belief that we are already united to Christ, justified, adopted and regenerated; and, on such a supposition, we could conceive of the accuracy of the doctrine which we are condemning. But the truth is, such a belief is not essential to the exercise of saving faith. This exercise, on the contrary, consists directly in an appropriation of Christ on the ground of the promise, and that, too, even though we were assured that we had not been previously justified. This being so, the sinner may believe himself under guilt, condemnation and total depravity; and, viewing the promise, and on the ground of the promise, and on that alone, take God as his Father in Christ, and in this exercise of appropriation, pray for the salvation thus appropriated, in all its parts. This exercise, moreover, is not to be only in one solitary instance in his life; for though such blessings as justification, adoption, &c. are formally given but once, and when given, never withdrawn, yet in every doubt, the believer should renew this exercise, and renew it on the same ground, the free promise—yea, though he had no doubt, he should renew this exercise of appropriation, desire and prayer, for reasons already shown.

But it is further objected, that to come to God with any degree of doubt, is unbelief, and unacceptable; because we are warranted to come with full assurance of faith, and therefore we should neither come with doubts ourselves, nor encourage others to come in such a manner. We reply, the objection is ambiguous—in a sense true, and in a sense not true. It is true, that doubting of our welcome to Christ, is unbelief and

sin; but to come to Christ under doubts, is not wholly sinful, nor unacceptable. Proofs of this position are numerous. Take, by way of specimen, Isa. xlii. 3: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." This surely expresses an acceptance and cherishing of weak faith, which is attended with doubts. Mark ix. 23—25: "Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit," &c. Here is weak faith, and an acknowledgment of unbelief, or doubts, with his faith, and yet it is accepted. We should neither doubt of our welcome to Christ, nor encourage others to doubt; but, on the other hand, we should come to Christ, although we have doubts, and we should encourage others to come, although they have doubts. Or, must we refuse to come till we have attained a full assurance? or till we have attained perfection? Must we refuse to exercise our weak faith, merely because we have not all that we should have, or could desire? Must we refuse to employ our one talent till we obtain ten? Shall we expect increase if we do not employ what we have? It is unquestionably our duty to employ what we have attained, as a means of attaining more. The question may be thus stated: is it our duty to come to Christ with weak faith, while we can attain no higher, or not to come at all? We shall not argue this question further, at present, but quote the mind of the Spirit, as expressed in Isa. xl. 11, 31: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."^{77*}

But it may not be improper to follow up the plausible but false views of our author to their legitimate consequences, in order to see whither they will lead us, and thereby discover more fully their fallacy. If our author be correct in condemning prayers for union to Christ, justification, regeneration and adoption, on the ground that in a believing approach to God we have these things, and therefore to ask them is a denial that we have them, and is consequently an unbelieving prayer,—then we ought to exclude from the matter of our prayers many other things besides those which he has specified; and so, under this rule of proscription, our errands to a throne of grace will be still further limited, and become few indeed. Thus, on the above principle, we ought not to ask faith, love, repentance, or any grace; because, if we have saving faith in our prayers, we have all these graces. This too, as we understand our author, he grants. But further, our perseverance in grace and continuance in a state of favor with God, are infallibly secured; they are sure as our continued justification; they are virtually the same thing. If, therefore, we should not ask justification, for the same reasons we should not ask perseverance, although the Psalmist prays for it. Ps. xvi. 1: "Preserve me, O God;" and Ps. xvii. 5: "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." And so our Lord prays for it on our behalf, who

* To our arguments on the above objection, we refer the reader, as applicable to another position of our author, in the same paper. He condemns the directing of persons under soul discouragements to go to Christ with a *may* be in their expectations, when they cannot get beyond this. We have, indeed, reason to believe that many do give such an advice, and that many take it, under erroneous notions of the believer's privileges. And the sinner's right and privilege, and his duty of approaching in assured faith, are happily set forth by our author; but yet, in showing the duty of assured faith, he seems to forget the question stated. To show the believer's duty of assured faith, is correct, but it is not on the question. It is true, he again brings up the true question itself, by way of objection; but in answering it, he again exhibits, as before, the warrant for assured faith, but does not answer the question, unless we may infer his answer to be, that if we cannot attain full assurance, we should not come at all. Now, however much we disapprove of their views, who deny the duty and privilege of full assurance on the ground of the promise alone, we must plead, that while the sinner cannot attain higher exercise, he must and ought to exercise the weak faith, the talent bestowed—though we neither justify his doubts, nor excuse him in the neglect to seek higher attainments.

had this gift for us bestowed on him, with infallible security. John xvii. 11: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." And further, we should never formally ask acceptance of our persons, because if we have faith to pray in the name of Christ, we assuredly have this. Eph. i. 6: "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

Again; we should not ask a gracious hearing in prayer, because if we approach in believing prayer, that is, in the name of Christ, for things agreeable to his will, we assuredly are graciously heard. John xvi. 23: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." If we should not ask justification, for the same reasons we should not ask a gracious hearing; because such a prayer as much supposes that we have it not, and that we are addressing a God who does not accept us, as a prayer for justification supposes these things respecting it. But how often does the Psalmist ask a gracious hearing! showing that he could ask that which by faith he knew he certainly had. And under such assurance, our Lord directs us to pray, Mark xi. 24: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Again; we should not ask acceptance of our services, because, in a believing approach, we assuredly have this. 1 Pet. ii. 5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." If the principles we oppose were correct, we should not ask this acceptance, as such a prayer would imply that we have it not, and that we are approaching in unbelief; and consequently, the usual conclusions of prayers used by Christians sound in the faith, ought to be entirely laid aside; for a concluding petition for a gracious hearing, and for an acceptance of our persons and services, in which Christians have thought they expressed that hope and that faith under which they had offered up their whole prayer, according to the arguments of our author, must be accounted the expression of unbelief.

Let the sinner, then, approach, in the exercise of faith, to God as his Father in Christ; let him use the liberty of a child with a Father, and ask with confidence whatever his soul desires of the things promised, and as they are promised: let him take God as his Father, and pray for every blessing belonging to that relation.

ASPASIO.

ART. III. *The Associate Synod of Original Seceders.*

We should have called the attention of the reader, in our last number, to the pamphlet, containing the Reasons of Protest against the decision of Synod respecting the Original Seceders, with the Answers by a committee of Synod, but were providentially prevented. It is probable the Synod will adopt the "Answers," without any material alteration. We cannot but think that they entirely annihilate all the force contained in the Reasons of Protest. Nor can we help thinking that the Protesters, at least the most of them, after reading these Answers, will quietly withdraw all further opposition to that act of Synod, against which they deemed it their duty to protest.

We can assure our brethren at the West that the statement which appeared in the *EMIGRANT* some time since, that the Original Seceders

were going back to the fellowship of the Established Church, is wholly without foundation. This statement, we have reason to believe, found its way into the columns of the *Emigrant*, (a paper published in the city of New-York) to answer a purpose: otherwise, why should the paper containing the statement in question have been gratuitously circulated among some of our people? We fully believed at the time that the statement made in the *Emigrant* was false, but we had not the means in our power of disproving it. A friend, however, has recently put into our hands several numbers of the *Scottish Guardian*, a paper published at Glasgow, and devoted to the support of the Establishment, from which we learn that the Original Seceders firmly maintain their ground, and that there is not the least indication of their return to the Established Church. The Synod of Old Light Burghers, it would seem, have agreed to adopt measures to secure their return to that church; and the latter appears to be ready and even anxious to receive them. We learn also, that the Original Seceders have been invited and very particularly courted by the Established Church, to return to her communion. This is admitted by the editor of the *Guardian*, who appears to be not a little out of humor with the Synod on account of the Address, which she had lately issued, and which, he thinks, shows a determination on her part not to be won, but to "live in 'single blessedness,' and enjoy her solitary importance."

In the *Guardian* of Nov. 28th, we find a letter from Rev. A. Duncan, of Dundee, addressed to the editor, and animadverting in somewhat severe terms on his remarks respecting the Synod's Address. We will first insert this letter, as it shows conclusively that at the date of it, there was no prospect of the Synod's return to the bosom of the Establishment; and then we will give to our readers the Address of the Synod, which, however, we shall not be able to insert entire in the present number.

To the Editor of the Scottish Guardian.

DUNDEE, NOV. 12th, 1834.

SIR—It was with no small degree of surprise and grief that I read your remarks in the yesterday's *Guardian*, respecting the Associate Synod's "Vindication of the Principles of the Church of Scotland." That you should find fault with a number of the sentiments contained in that production—nay, that you should condemn them pretty strongly, as too strict and antiquated for these liberal and trimming times—I was prepared to learn; but I confess I was not prepared for such a bitter attack on men and principles which you have so often lauded in your columns, and much less for the unbecoming levity which characterises the whole article. Surely, neither the success with which the *Guardian* has triumphed over its dangers, nor even the prospect of forty new churches added this year to the Establishment, warranted such a spirit on a subject so grave, weighty and powerful.

The deep and gratuitous insult which you have offered to the Rev. Dr. M'Crie, in the commencement of your remarks, I shall not dwell upon. Permit me only to say, that every one who knows that amiable man and honored servant of Christ, knows that the vile insinuation which you have thrown out against him is as groundless in point of fact, as it is abhorrent to his principles as a true Presbyterian. Nay more, Sir, your church, I can tell you, has not a truer son within her pale, nor one more ready to sacrifice honors, liberty, and life itself, in the honest prosecution of that *real* reformation and extension of her principles, to which she is pledged by her vows to God.

But this leads me to say, that your ungrateful attack on Dr. M'Crie, (ungrateful, inasmuch as you have been more than once indebted to his generous and powerful aid in behalf of your paper) is lighter than a feather in comparison with the wanton levity with which you have treated the covenants of our ancestors, the controversy of which God, whose covenants these are, is pleading at this moment with the kingdoms of Britain and Ireland. Before you profaned these sacred deeds in terms so unhallowed, you should have made yourself sure that they were legitimate objects of ridicule, and that you have nothing to do with their descending obligation. At all events, I will make bold to tell you, that had you been acquainted with their character and history, and had you studied the present condition of the churches in Britain and Ireland in the light which they afford, you would have found that the recognition of the obligation

of these covenants, and the revival of the spirit which gave birth to them, have more to do with the preservation and diffusion of the bread of life in our afflicted country, than the erection of ten thousand churches, under a system that despises them. In proof of this, I refer you to "Stevenson's Plea for the Covenanted Reformation in Britain and Ireland," a publication which every minister and member of the Church of Scotland, who wishes well to his country, should study night and day, till he imbibe its spirit. In vain, I repeat it, will you build churches and schools; in vain multiply associations for the defence and extension of the Scottish and English Establishments, until the principles unfolded in that Plea, and enforced with such perspicuity and faithfulness, guide your counsels, and direct all your operations.

What your notion of external reforms may be, when you accuse the Associate Synod of "concentrating their anxiety too much upon these, and overlooking far greater and more substantial reforms," I cannot tell. Of one thing I am sure, that their continued testimony against the hireling ministry which have too long filled the pulpits of the Church of Scotland; their testimony against the erroneous doctrine which has poisoned so many of the souls of her people; their faithful condemnation of her relaxation of discipline, whereby the ordinances of religion have been so fearfully profaned in her; and their zealous reprobation, down to the present hour, of the cowardly indifference of her ministers and people to that yoke of bondage which, like the incantations of Delilah over Samson of old, has well nigh delivered her a hapless victim into the hands of her inveterate foes,—are more connected with *internal* and *substantial* reform than any measures which the members of that church have yet adopted, excepting the admission of the Chapel Ministers to their proper status in her courts, the revival of evangelical doctrine among her young ministers, and the Assembly's late act concerning the sanctification of the Sabbath. Nor is it true that the Associate Synod has shown no concern for the extension of the means of religious instruction to every corner and hovel of our land. Had their contentings in behalf of the solemn covenants of our fathers been attended to, and the design of these covenants followed out, as the Synod have long prayed, parochial schools and churches would have covered not the length and breadth of Scotland only, but of England and Ireland also; every thousand or fifteen hundred of the population of the British empire might have this day been "sitting under their vine and under their fig tree," in this respect, "without any to make them afraid;" and what is more, they would have been all united in the same common object—the worship and service of the one living and true God.

And pray, Sir, let me ask, whether such a union as this, founded on principles derived not from human expediency, but from the word of God, nor directed by the latitudinarian maxims of the present day, but by a sacred regard to the authority of Christ, would not have been more likely to secure our country against the inroads of infidelity and the encroachments of Antichrist, than any confederacy with a hierarchy, which every honest Presbyterian must unsparingly condemn? At any rate, I beg to assure you, that while the Associate Synod of Original Seceders "disclaim all connection with the principles of those who are now seeking the subversion of the *Establishments* of England and Ireland," *as such*, they will never, I trust, be left to "join in the latitudinarian scheme, which, regarding all forms of church government as indifferent, would perpetuate the hierarchy, in the *vain* hope of seeing it converted into an effective organ for reforming the church, and diffusing the blessings of religion throughout the nation." Nor will they be left, I also hope, to cease testifying against the Church of Scotland, should she still farther forget her vows to God, and take part in such an unprincipled confederacy. The Synod, Sir, are but few in number, and they are "a sect," I may say, "everywhere spoken against;" but their testimony for the covenanted reformation of Britain and Ireland, has the country's best interests for its object, and it will not be forgotten by Him who is Britain's covenanted God, in the day when he shall "arise and have mercy on our Zion."

Permit me only to add, Sir, that my object in writing these lines, which I have penned more in sorrow than in anger, is not to defend the Associate Synod's Address, for it needs no defence, but simply to testify my deep affection for the Church of Scotland, concerning which I will not yet despair, and more seriously than ever to call your attention, and the attention of your associates in the work of reforming her, to the study of the character and history of her solemn vows to God, and to the necessity of adopting the principles of her *second* reformation period, if you wish to see her a "quiet habitation, and the joy of the whole land." If you delay this but a very little longer, and much more, if you continue to ridicule and despise a work so intimately connected with the Redeemer's declarative glory, neither human policy, nor human power, will long preserve us from the doom which awaits a covenant-breaking people.

I am, Sir, your most obt. servant,

ALEX. DUNCAN.

ART. IV. *Vindication of the Principles of the Church of Scotland, in relation to Questions presently agitated: An Address by the Associate Synod of Original Seceders.*

EDINBURGH, 12th September, 1834.

The Associate Synod of Original Seceders, taking into their serious consideration the very peculiar aspect of the time in which their lot has been cast, and their duty, as watchmen and witnesses, to give seasonable warning, and to apply their testimony to existing evils, view themselves as called upon to put forth the following declaration and defence. The authority of scripture affords, they conceive, ample warrant for such an appearance in behalf of the truth, and they have an example in the laudable practice of their reforming ancestors on similar occasions.

The Synod, who neither expect any benefit from the overthrow of establishments, nor flatter themselves, from any present appearance, with the prospect of participating, as individuals, in the advantages of their continuance, may be allowed to claim at least the merit of disinterestedness in the part which they now take; but they would claim a hearing on still higher considerations. Regarding themselves not as an isolated party, or a hostile sect, but as a branch of the Church of Scotland, cordially attached to her reformed constitution, and solemnly pledged, by the very terms of their secession, to embrace every opportunity of promoting her interests and defending her cause, they feel themselves especially called upon to apply to the great questions which now engage the attention of the religious public, the principles contained in their statement of the Secession Testimony, lately published to the world. In endeavoring, therefore, to comply with the call thus given them, they would direct their attention to the two extremes into which the religious community have fallen, and shall consider, in the first place, the opinions of those who are attempting to overthrow all religious establishments, and, in the second place, the abuses and corruptions of these establishments, against which the Synod continue to testify.

1. Our reforming ancestors bore faithful testimony to the spiritual nature of the church, and to the sole headship of Christ over her, as his free and independent kingdom. While their recorded sentiments on this question show the attention which they had bestowed on it, and the accuracy with which they understood it, viewed as a matter of opinion, the hardships and sufferings to which they submitted, in support of their testimony, prove the importance which they attached to it as a matter of conscience; for it was in defence of the spiritual liberties of the church, in opposition to the Erastian encroachments of the civil rulers then in power, that many of them shed their blood in fields and on scaffolds,—but these faithful and enlightened martyrs never once dreamed that a friendly connexion between the church and the State was incompatible with the spiritual character and liberties of the former. They acted on the principle that nations, as such, as well as individuals, being dependent on God, who is the Governor among the nations, must have a religious character; and that, when favored with a revelation of Christianity, they are bound to recognize it as a religion from God, and to give public countenance and support to the profession of it. Guided by these principles, and borne out by the apostolic commission, “Go and disciple all nations,” the functionaries of the church considered it their duty to co-operate with the State, each acting within its proper sphere, in securing a civil as well as an ecclesiastical reformation, so far as regarded the national profession and public morals.

With these sentiments and feelings, the Synod cannot observe without

deep concern so many in the United Secession Church, both in public and private station, including not a few of those who once, along with themselves entered into these solemn engagements, and vowed that "they would follow no divisive course from the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland," now appearing in the ranks of what is called the "Voluntary Church Association," the principles of which go to subvert the constitution of that church, and to hold up as unscriptural and antichristian, not only a national establishment of religion, but every thing national connected with religion, including a national profession of religion, national vows for promoting and maintaining its reformation; and all national exertions for diffusing its salutary influence, by means of pecuniary support throughout the country and its dependencies,—an Association, the avowed object of which is to obtain from the Legislature a new Act Rescissory, annulling all the acts of the State framed during the reforming periods for advancing religion, suppressing profaneness, and elevating the tone of public morals, without even the exception of those which relate to the external protection of the sanctity of the christian Sabbath.

First, we condemn this system on account of its atheistical character and tendency. Viewing States and nations as dependent on God for their national existence and their national prosperity, we must maintain that they are bound, in the very act of their organization, to recognize the being and universal supremacy of the Deity, and to take such active measures as are competent to them, that he be publicly honored and served among them. But this can only be done nationally by some public enactment of the representatives of the State. Besides, though civil government is founded on natural principles, yet as the law of nature binds men to believe whatever God may be pleased to reveal as the rule of faith and manners, it follows that nations which have been privileged with supernatural religion, are bound to recognize it as the divine will, to frame all their laws, so far as respects morals, according to its prescriptions, and to give it their public countenance and support. But the system which we are condemning, by reprobating all national interference with religion, strikes at the root of all national acknowledgment of God; and, by admitting the principle that a creature of God, such as every nation is, may live "without God in the world," natively tends to promote national irreligion.

Secondly, we condemn the system as at variance with sound policy. It is an axiom of civil policy, the wisdom of which is becoming every day more apparent, that to prevent crime is better than to be under the necessity of punishing it when committed. Religion lies at the foundation of all confidence and duty in civil society. Without its powerful aids, civil government could not exist among men, far less could it gain its ends in promoting to any extent the public good, by laws and penalties which can only affect the external practice. And, of all others, the religion of Jesus must be admitted to have the most powerful tendency to suppress crime, to purify the stream of public morals, and to promote that "righteousness which exalteth a nation." Wise and good men may differ in opinion as to the expediency of particular measures, and their tendency to advance the interests of religion and the welfare of a country; but to lay it down as a principle, that civil government has no right to interpose its authority for the encouraging of that which, by the confession of all, contributes in the highest degree to the improvement of society, is a position at once so preposterous and so hazardous, as to be admitted only by persons whose minds are so rivetted on the abuses of ecclesiastical establishments, as to overlook one of the plainest and fundamental maxims of the law of nature and nations. To carry the "Voluntary" scheme into effect, would be to wrench from the social edifice its main support and

firmest pillar. It would be to sin against society, as well as against God, and would pave the way for universal anarchy and confusion.

We may add that the scheme, so far as it proposes the establishment of a constitution in which the rulers shall give positive countenance and support to no particular sect, is impracticable. We have the highest authority for asserting, that no man or body of men, in what capacity soever they may act, can remain neutral with regard to the religion of Jesus. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." If civil rulers are good men, they will feel themselves bound to employ the influence of their station in support of the true religion; if they are of an opposite character, they will naturally throw the weight of their authority into the scale of a false religion. And, if "he who ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God," how is it possible to comply with this rule, and yet maintain, in acts of government, a strict neutrality as to religion? The only persons one can suppose qualified for assuming the reins of government over a nation constituted according to this system, would be those who deny the being of a God and moral responsibility, though even these would exert the influence of their station to bring over the nation to their sentiments, and would, in all probability, prove the most bitter persecutors.

Thirdly, we must condemn the scheme as unscriptural. That the scriptures pointedly condemn those nations and their governments who have opposed and persecuted the church, cannot be disputed. The greater part of the nations of antiquity now extinct, were, on this account, overthrown in the righteous judgment of God; their opposition to the church of God having filled up the cup of their national iniquity, and brought upon them wrath to the uttermost. (Isa. xxxiv. 2—8.) Nor have those been held guiltless who remained neutral in the season of her distress. Hence the excommunicating curse laid upon the Ammonite and the Moabite, Deut. xxiii. 3, 4: "Because," says God to his ancient people, "they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt." On the other hand, heathen nations and their rulers have been commended and rewarded for protecting the church, and furnishing her with pecuniary support out of the national funds, for the maintenance of her public ordinances. (Ezra i. 2, 3, 4; vi. 8, 9, 10; vii. 21, 22, 23.) Let those who reverence the word of God, judge whether these decrees were inserted in it for an example, or for a beacon to those on whom the ends of the world are come. Has the church of Christ, as a visible society, no external wants that admit of being supplied from national resources? Or, are the sceptres of those who rule over Christians more profane than the sceptre of the Medes and Persians? It is impossible to produce a single passage of scripture in which civil rulers are prohibited from employing the influence of their station for the benefit of the christian church, in every way competent to them, and consistent with her character as a free and independent kingdom. On the contrary, they are expressly required, in the second Psalm, to do homage to Christ, and exert themselves to promote his kingdom, not merely in their private capacity, but as rulers; for, as it was in their public character that they are reprimanded for opposing him, (ver. 1—4) it must be in the same capacity that they are enjoined to "serve the Lord with fear," and to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry," (ver. 11, 12.) That the services here enjoined upon kings and rulers refer to the kindly offices which they are to perform to the church for Christ's sake, is no less evident from numerous promises made to the church, of which the following, which apply to New Testament times, may serve as an example:—"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba

shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of the strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." (Ps. lxxii. 10, 11; Isa. lx. 9, 10.) The Synod consider it unnecessary to notice the nugatory attempts that have been made to wrest the meaning of such plain passages of scripture, and to reconcile them with the strange doctrine that men, in their legislative and national capacity, have nothing to do with the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Fourthly, we must condemn this scheme as directly opposed to one important design of supernatural revelation—the improvement of human society. Besides its great design of promoting the spiritual and eternal happiness of individuals, supernatural religion was intended as a remedial system to society at large, and it has proved so, in a less or greater degree, in every nation where it has been enjoyed. While it does not seek to subvert the natural or civil relations which exist among men, as members of society, it enables them to discharge the duties connected with these to greater advantage. It improves the character of parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants, rulers and subjects. It has contributed more, by its direct or indirect influence, to the elevation of the human mind, to the civilization of barbarous nations, to the improvement of their laws and institutions, and to the general amelioration of the state of society, than all the discoveries of science, combined with the power of the civil arm, either in ancient or modern times. In order that it may have this effect, it must have free course among all ranks of men, and in all places—in town and country, in hospitals and prisons, in navies and armies; and it must be the high duty of those who have the oversight and government of these, to give this blessed religion every facility to diffuse itself, and communicate its salutary influences. We might here employ an argument which has been much insisted on by the advocates of this system, that the ministers of the christian religion are to be supported by those only who reap the benefit of their labors. In so far, they are right; but do nations, as such, and their governments, derive no benefit, even in a temporal respect, from the labors of the servants of Christ? If, as we have already seen, religion is necessary to secure the moral ends of civil government, and if the christian religion, above all others, is eminently conducive to those ends, can the national funds be diverted from their proper channel, when part of them is appropriated to the purpose of instructing a nation in the doctrines and laws of Christianity?

Lastly, we must condemn this system as striking at the foundation of God's moral government, so far as regards nations or bodies politic. The "Voluntary" scheme evidently proceeds on the principle, that the moral government of God respects man in the individual only, and not in the social capacity; for, if it were admitted that nations, as such, are the subjects of this government, it would follow, of course, that they must have a moral, and consequently a religious character; and this being once granted, the conclusion would be found unavoidable, that, wherever the christian religion is revealed, nations must be bound to recognize and embrace, and to give it their public countenance and support. Whether the friends of this scheme will admit it or not, the principle involved in

it amounts to a practical denial of the moral government of the Almighty, so far as it regards nations, and strikes at the root of all national responsibility; truths which are as consonant with the light of nature, as they are clearly taught in scripture, and illustrated in the history of divine Providence.

That those Seceders who have now joined the ranks of the Voluntary Association, have long lost sight of these important doctrines, must be apparent to all who trace their progressive defection from their original principles. The first Seceders recognized the Reformation in our land as a national as well as an ecclesiastical Reformation, consolidated by national vows, which they acknowledged to be of perpetual obligation on the nations which entered into them; and they accordingly regarded all the defections from that Reformation as national sins, aggravated by being breaches of national engagements, which, unless repented of, God would sooner or later punish by national judgments. From these principles the great body of modern Seceders have departed, step by step. First, they discarded these covenants as national deeds, admitting them only as ecclesiastical; they then dropped from their Testimony the continued obligation of these deeds altogether; and now, by adopting the "Voluntary" scheme, they condemn them as antichristian: thus doing all that lies in their power to fix a stigma upon the whole cause of the Reformation, which was carried on, under Providence, by means of these public vows, and to which we owe those civil and religious privileges that exalt these kingdoms above other nations of the world.

The evils which attach to the churches established by law in this country, furnish no reason why Seceders should condemn the principle of establishments, or wage war against their existence. They satisfied themselves for a long time with bearing a public testimony against these abuses, and maintaining ecclesiastical fellowship among themselves under the banner of that testimony. If they thought that more was required of them in the present times, the way was open to them as citizens, if not in their ecclesiastical capacity, to petition the Legislature for the repeal of the patronage law, the abjuration oath, and other acts of the State, which oppose barriers to the work of reformation, and to a re-union among its friends. Such a course would have been becoming their profession: it might have secured the co-operation of other Presbyterians, both within and without the Establishment; and whether successful or not in their efforts, they might have consoled themselves with the reflection that they had improved the opportunity, denied to their fathers, of addressing a parliament more disposed than formerly to listen to the public voice, and of seeking the redress of grievances and the correction of abuses, deeply affecting the interests of religion and the peace of the country. But, instead of this, they have embarked in a scheme which, if it should succeed, would bury the grand object aimed at by the secession, in the same grave with the corruptions of the Establishment; and to accomplish this, they have identified themselves with persons whose principles formerly defeated a great and laudable attempt to heal the wounds which superstition, leagued with arbitrary power, had inflicted on these kingdoms—so that, though we and all the world should be silent, the Westminster standards, to which they still profess an ambiguous and ill defined adherence, and from which they derive all their respectability and influence, would rise up and condemn them.

To the professed friends of the covenanted cause in other denominations, we would earnestly repeat the call which we formerly gave, to consider the necessity of union and co-operation in its defence at the present crisis. This assuredly is not the time when either the pride of party, or the recollection of past offences, ought to be allowed to defeat

attempts at conciliation, and stand in the way of the pleasure, the advantage, and the duty of contending, under one banner, for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let the sad consequences of misunderstanding among the friends of this cause, in former times of peril, warn us to avoid similar conduct, and excite us to repair, instead of seeking to perpetuate, the breaches which they have occasioned. United exertions are required to maintain a faithful testimony in a state of separation; and united wisdom will be useful in dealing with the judicatories of the Establishment, if Providence should at any future period prepare the way for direct intercourse with them. When the enemies of the Reformation are strengthening themselves by combination, it ill becomes its friends to weaken each other's hands by remaining separate, especially when they have in the cause which they espouse such a well defined ground, and in the solemn engagements whose obligations they agree in owning, such a sacred pledge of union. How can the friends of the "covenanted uniformity" expect the generation to appreciate that desirable object, while they themselves set an example of disunion, and encourage a spirit of sectarian independence of each other? "Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten."

[To be continued.]

ART. V. *Historical Argument in Favor of Infant Baptism.*

Extracted from Dr. Miller's new work on this subject.

The history of the christian church, from the apostolic age, furnishes an argument of irresistible force in favor of the divine authority of infant baptism.

I can assure you, my friends, with the utmost candor and confidence, after much careful inquiry on the subject, that, for more than fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ, there was not a single society of professing Christians on earth who opposed infant baptism on any thing like the grounds which distinguish our modern Baptist brethren. It is an *undoubted fact*, that the people known in ecclesiastical history under the name of Anabaptists, who arose in Germany in the year 1522, were the very first body of people in the christian world who rejected the baptism of infants, on the principles now adopted by the Antipædobaptist body. This, I am aware, will be regarded as an untenable position by some of the ardent friends of the Baptist cause; but nothing can be more certain than that it is even so. Of this, a short induction of particulars will afford conclusive evidence.

Tertullian, about 200 years after the birth of Christ, is the first man of whom we read in the ecclesiastical history, as speaking a word against infant baptism; and he, while he recognizes the existence and prevalence of the practice, and expressly recommends that infants be baptised, if they are not likely to survive the period of infancy; yet advises that, where there is a prospect of their living, baptism be delayed until a late period in life. But what was the reason of this advice? The moment we look at the reason, we see that it avails nothing to the cause, in support of which it is sometimes produced. Tertullian adopted the superstitious idea that baptism was accompanied with the remission of all past sins, and that sins committed after baptism were peculiarly dangerous. He therefore advised that not merely infants, but young men and women, and even young widows and widowers, should postpone their baptism until the period of youthful appetite and passion should have passed. In short, he advised that in all cases in which death was not likely to intervene, baptism be postponed until the subjects of it should have arrived at a period of life when they would be no longer in danger of being led astray by youthful lusts. And thus, for more than a century after the age of Tertullian, we find some of the most conspicuous converts to the christian faith postponing baptism till the close of life. Constantine the Great, we are told, though a professing Christian for many years before, was not baptised till after the commencement of his last illness. The same fact is recorded of a number of other distinguished converts to Christianity, about and after that time. But surely, advice and facts of this kind make nothing in favor of the system of our Baptist brethren. Indeed, taken altogether, their historical bearing is strongly in favor of our system.

The next persons that we hear of, as calling in question the propriety of infant baptism, were the small body of people in France, about twelve hundred years after Christ, who followed a certain *Peter de Bruis*, and formed an inconsiderable section of the people known in ecclesiastical history under the general name of the *Waldenses*. This body maintained that infants ought not to be baptised, because they were incapable of salvation. They taught that none could be saved but those who wrought out their own salvation, by a long course of self denial and labor. And as infants were incapable of thus "working out their own salvation," they held, that making them the subjects of a sacramental seal was an absurdity. But surely our Baptist brethren cannot be willing to consider these people as their predecessors, or to adopt their creed.

We hear no more of any society or organized body of *Antipædobaptists*, until the sixteenth century, when they arose, as before stated, in Germany, and for the first time broached the doctrine of our modern Baptist brethren. As far as I have been able to discover, they were absolutely unknown in the whole christian world before that time.

But we have something more than mere negative testimony on this subject. It is not only certain that we hear of no society of *Antipædobaptists* resembling our present Baptist brethren, for more than fifteen hundred years after Christ; but we have positive and direct proof that, during the whole of that time, infant baptism was the general and unopposed practice of the christian church.

To say nothing of earlier intimations, wholly irreconcilable with any other practice than that of infant baptism, *Origen*, a Greek father of the third century, and decidedly the most learned man in his day, speaks in the most unequivocal terms of the baptism of infants, as the general practice of the church in his time, and as having been received from the apostles. His testimony is as follows:

"According to the usage of the church, baptism is given even to infants; when, if there were nothing in infants which needed forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would seem superfluous."* Again: "Infants are baptised for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? or when have they sinned? Or, can there be any reason for the laver in their case, unless it be according to the sense which we have mentioned above, viz: that no one is free from pollution, though he has lived but one day upon earth! And because by baptism native pollution is taken away, therefore infants are baptised."† Again: "For this cause it was, that the church received an order from the apostles to give baptism even to infants."‡

The testimony of *Cyprian*, a Latin father of the third century, contemporary with *Origen*, is no less decisive. It is as follows:

In the year 253 after Christ, there was a council of sixty-six bishops or pastors held at Carthage, in which *Cyprian* presided. To this council, *Fidus*, a country pastor, presented the following question, which he wished them by their united wisdom to solve, viz: whether it was necessary, in the administration of baptism, as of circumcision, to wait until the *eighth day*, or whether a child might be baptised at an earlier period after its birth? The question, it will be observed, was not whether infants ought to be baptised—that was taken for granted; but simply whether it was necessary to wait until the eighth day after their birth. The council came *unanimously* to the following decision, and transmitted it in a letter to the inquirer:

"*Cyprian* and the rest of the bishops who were present in the council, sixty-six in number, to *Fidus*, our brother, greeting:

"As to the case of infants: whereas, you judge that they must not be baptised within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, that no one should be baptised and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were *all* in the council of a very different opinion. As for what you thought proper to be done, no one was of your mind, but we all rather judged that the mercy and grace of God is to be denied to no human being that is born. This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the council: that we ought not to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind to us all; and this rule, as it holds for all, we think ought more especially to be observed in reference to infants, even to those newly born."||

Surely no testimony can be more unexceptionable and decisive than this. Lord Chancellor King, in his account of the primitive church, after quoting what is given above, and much more, subjoins the following remark: "Here, then, is a Synodical decree for the baptism of infants, as formal as can possibly be expected; which, being the judgment of a Synod, is more authentic and cogent than that of a private father, it being supposable that a private father might write his own particular judgment and opinion only; but the determination of a Synod (and he might have added, the unanimous determination of a Synod of sixty-six members,) denotes the common practice and usage of the whole church."§

* Homil. viii. in Levit. ch. 12. † Homil. in Luc. 14. ‡ Comment. in Epist. ad Romanos, Lib. 5.
 || Cyprian Epist. 66. § Inquiry into the Constitution, &c. part 2, chap. 3.

The famous Chrysostom, a Greek father, who flourished towards the close of the fourth century, having had occasion to speak of circumcision, and of the inconvenience and pain which attended its dispensation, proceeds to say: "But *our* circumcision, I mean the grace of *baptism*, gives cure without pain, and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the Spirit, and it has no *determinate time*, as that had; but one that is in the *very beginning of his age*, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive the circumcision made without hands, in which there is no trouble to be undergone but to throw off the load of sins, and to receive pardon for all past offences.*

Passing by the testimony of several other conspicuous writers of the third and fourth centuries, in support of the fact, that infant baptism was generally practised when they wrote, I shall detain you with only one testimony more in relation to the history of this ordinance. It is that of *Augustine*, one of the most pious, learned and venerable fathers of the christian church, who lived a little more than three hundred years after the apostles—taken in connection with that of Pelagius, the learned heretic, who lived at the same time. Augustine had been pleading against Pelagius, in favor of the doctrine of original sin. In the course of this plea, he asks: "Why are infants baptised for the remission of sins, if they have no sin?" at the same time intimating to Pelagius, that if he would be consistent with himself, his denial of original sin must draw after it the denial of infant baptism. The reply of Pelagius is striking and unequivocal. "Baptism," says he, "ought to be administered to infants with the same sacramental words which are used in the case of adult persons." "Men slander me as if I denied the sacrament of baptism to infants. *I never heard of any, not even of the most impious heretics, who denied baptism to infants*, for who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptised and born again in Christ, and so make them miss of the kingdom of God?" Again, Augustine remarks, in reference to the Pelagians: "Since they grant that infants must be baptised, as not being able to *resist the authority of the whole church, which was doubtless delivered by our Lord and his apostles*, they must consequently grant that they stand in need of the benefit of the Mediator, that being offered by the sacrament, and by the charity of the faithful; and so being incorporated into Christ's body, they may be reconciled to God." Again, speaking of certain heretics at Carthage, who, though they acknowledged infant baptism, took wrong views of its meaning, Augustine remarks: "They, *minding the scriptures and the authority of the whole church*, and the form of the sacrament itself, see well that baptism in infants is for the remission of sins." Farther, in his work against the *Donatists*, the same writer, speaking of baptised infants obtaining salvation without the personal exercise of faith, he says, "*which the whole body of the church holds, as delivered to them in the case of little infants baptised, who certainly cannot believe with the heart unto righteousness, or confess with the mouth unto salvation; nay, by their crying and noise while the sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy mysteries; and yet no christian man will say they are baptised to no purpose.*" Again he says, "The custom of our mother the church, in baptising infants, must not be disregarded, nor be accounted needless, nor believed to be any thing else than *an ordinance delivered to us from the Apostles.*" In short, those who will be at the trouble to consult the large extracts from the writings of Augustine, among other christian fathers, in the learned *Wall's* history of infant baptism, will find that venerable father declaring again and again, that he never met with any Christian, either of the general church or of any of the sects, nor with any writer who owned the authority of scripture, who taught any other doctrine than that infants were to be baptised for the remission of sin.

Here, then, were two men, undoubtedly among the most learned then in the world, Augustine and Pelagius—the former as familiar probably with the writings of all the distinguished fathers who had gone before him, as any man of his time; the latter also a man of great learning and talents, who had travelled over the greater part of the christian world, who both declare, about three hundred years after the apostolic age, that they never saw or heard of any one who called himself a Christian, not even the most impious heretic—no, nor any writer who claimed to believe in the scriptures, who denied the baptism of infants.† Can the most incredulous reader, who is not fast bound in the fetters of invincible prejudice, hesitate to admit, first, that these men verily believed that infant baptism had been the universal practice of the church, from the days of the apostles; and secondly, that, situated and informed as they were, it was impossible that they should be mistaken?

* Homil. 40, in *Genesis*. † See *Wall's History*, part I, chap. 15—19.

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✎ We hope our subscribers will bear in mind that the 11th volume is drawing to a close; and that we stand in need of their payments. The sum is small to them; but very important to us. Many are behind for a number of years.

Subscribers will be considered holden for the XII Volume who do not signify their intention to discontinue the work before the termination of the present volume.

✎ The Reasons of Protest against the deed of Synod, acknowledging the Original Seceders to be in communion with us, and the Answers to those Reasons, by a Committee of Synod, of which 1000 copies were published, have been all sold. This notice is given for the information of such as have ordered copies, which have not been forwarded to them.

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